

## Message Text

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ACTION ARA-10

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FM AMEMBASSY BUENOS AIRES

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 1046

C O N F I D E N T I A L BUENOS AIRES 3068

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PINT, AR

SUBJ: MRS. PERON GIVES STATE OF THE NATION REPORT TO CONGRESS

REF: BA 2947

1. AFTER BRIEF INAUGURAL CEREMONIES MAY 1, JOINT SESSION OF CONGRESS HEARD ALL EIGHT CABINET MINISTERS GIVE REPORTS ON YEARS ACTIVITIES IN THEIR RESPECTIVE AREAS. NONE OF THE REPORTS PROVIDED NEW INFORMATION OR BROKE NEW GROUND. GOMEZ MORALES' REPORT, HOWEVER, WAS NOTEWORTHY FOR ITS FRANKNESS AND EMPHASIS ON AUSTERITY. INDEED, HE SEEMED TO BE THE ONLY MINISTER WHO MADE AN EFFORT TO GIVE A SERIOUS REPORT, OTHERS GIVING RHETORIC PRIDE OF PLACE OVER FACTS (SEE SEPTTEL).

2. FOLLOWING REPORTS OF CABINET MINISTERS, MRS. PERON DELIVERED LENGTHY STATE OF THE NATION ADDRESS WHICH SAID VIRTUALLY NOTHING. IN ESSENCE, SHE REPORTED THAT GOVERNMENT WAS DOING SPLENDIDLY IN SPITE OF EFFORTS OF ANTIPATRIOTIC TYPES TO PERTURB SITUATION. SHE PRAISED WORK OF HER CABINET MINISTERS, ESPECIALLY MINISTER OF SOCIAL WELFARE.

3. MRS. PERON DID STRESS NEED FOR POLITICAL DIALOGUE, AND IN DESCRIBING WORK OF INTERIOR MINISTER, SHE UNDERLINED FACT THAT HE DEVOTED INTENSIVE EFFORT TO SEARCH FOR NATIONAL CONSENSUS, THUS SUGGESTING THAT THIS EFFORT HAD HER FULL SUPPORT.

4. COMMENT: IN FACT, ROCAMORA'S EFFORTS IN THIS DIRECTION  
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HAVE USUALLY BEEN UNDERTAKEN DESPITE MRS. PERON AND LOPEZ

REGA RATHER THAN ON THEIR ORDERS. NONETHELESS, A FEW MONTHS OR EFEN WEEKS AGO, MRS. PERON'S REFERENCE TO THE NEED FOR POLITICAL DIALOGUE WOULD HAVE HEARTENED RESPONSIBLE ELEMENTS WHO WISHED TO PRESERVE SOME SEMBLANCE OF CONSENSUS. AT THIS POINT, HOWEVER, THEY HAVE SIMPLY WRITTEN OFF HER WORDS AS EMPTY RHETORIC. AS ONE HIGH-RANKING UCR SOURCE PUT IT "SHE OCCASIONALLY MAKES A GESTURE OR SAYS SOMETHING IN FAVOR OF CONSENSUS, BUT ONE NEED ONLY LOOK AT THE DEEDS AND THE FACTS TO SEE THAT THESE GESTURES AND WORDS ARE EMPTY". CASE IN POINT WAS FACT THAT AS MRS. PERON SPOKE, SENATE WAS PRESIDED OVER BY ONLY A FIRST VICE PRESIDENT, IN DIRECT VIOLATION OF ARTICLE 50 OF THE CONSTITUTION AND DESPITE UNANIMOUS PROTESTS OF THE OPPOSITION PARTIES (SEE REFTEL). FURTHER, WHILE MRS. PERON DID MEET WITH RICARDO BALBIN OF UCR ON APRIL 16, SHE REPORTEDLY INDICATED NO INTERSTS IN POINTS HE RAISED. INDEED, BALBIN HAS TOLD HIS CLOSEST LIEUTENANTS THAT HE HAD IMPRESSION MRS. PERON ONLY WENT THROUGH THE MOTIONS OF RECEIVING HIM IN ORDER TO PLEASE MINISTER OF JUSTICE BENITEZ, WHO INTERCEDED WITH HER AFTER LOPEZ REGA HAD CONVINCED HER SHO SHOULD NOT SEE BALBIN. EMBOFF TOKD BY HIGH RANKING PERONIST THAT AFTER BALBIN DEPARTED THE MEETING, LOPEZ REGA POINTEDLY WENT AROUND THE CHAMBER WITH DISINFECTANT SPRAY - A PRANK WHICH DREW A SMILE FROM MRS PERON. UCR SOURCE WHO IS INTIMATE OF BALBIN SUBSEQUENTLY TOLD EMBOFF SAME STORY--ERGO, BALBIN HAS HEARD IT AND BELIEVES IT; HENCE, WHETHER OR NOT IS IS TRUE (AND IT PROBABLY IS), POLITICAL EFFECT IS THE SAME. THIS, ON TOP OF FACT THAT IN THE PRIVATE MEETING, MRS. PERON BRUSHED ASIDE EVIDENCE PRESENTED BY BALBIN THAT IT WAS LOPEZ REGA'S MEN WHO HAD RECENTLY TRIED TO ASSASSINATE HIM, HAS KILLED ANY LINGERING HOPES UCR MAY HAVE HAD CONCERNING POSSIBILITY OF MEANINGFUL DIALOGUE WITH MRS. PERON.

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